

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

RONALD EDWARD WILLIAMS,

Plaintiff,

Civil Action No.

9:11-CV-1477 (TJM/DEP)

v.

CORPORAL SILLIMAN,¹

Defendant.

APPEARANCES:

OF COUNSEL:

FOR PLAINTIFF:

Ronald Edward Williams, *Pro Se*
05122-055
Terre Haute Federal Correctional
Institution
P.O. Box 33
Terre Haute, IN 47808

FOR DEFENDANT:

FRANK W. MILLER LAW FIRM
6575 Kirkville Road
East Syracuse, NY 13057

BRYAN N. GEORGIADY, ESQ.

DAVID E. PEEBLES
U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE

¹ While both plaintiff's amended complaint and the court's records identify the remaining defendant in the case as "Corporal Scilliman," an affidavit submitted in connection with the pending cross-motions reflects that the correct spelling of this individual's last name is "Silliman." See generally [Dkt. No. 36-6](#). The clerk is respectfully directed to adjust the court's records accordingly.

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Pro se plaintiff Ronald Edward Williams, a federal prison inmate, has commenced this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and *Bivens v. Six Unknown Named Agents of Fed. Bureau of Narcotics*, 403 U.S. 388 (1971), alleging that, while confined as a pretrial federal detainee in a local jail facility, he was denied meaningful access to legal materials and retaliated against for complaining regarding that deprivation. Currently pending before the court in connection with the action are cross-motions. The motion process was initiated by plaintiff, who filed an application requesting that the court take judicial notice of certain facts. The defendant has opposed that motion and cross-moved for summary judgment dismissing plaintiff's remaining retaliation claim, based on both procedural and substantive grounds. For the reasons set forth below, I recommend that plaintiff's motion be denied, and that plaintiff's remaining retaliation claim be dismissed based upon his failure to exhaust available administrative remedies before commencing suit.

I. BACKGROUND

Between May 21, 2011, and March 6, 2012, plaintiff was a pretrial detainee held in the custody of the United States Marshal Service, and housed at the Cayuga Correctional Facility ("CCF"), located in Auburn, New

York. See generally [Dkt. No. 12](#); [Dkt. No. 36-5 at 2-3](#).1-2. Plaintiff's detention was the result of federal charges pending against him during the times relevant to his claims in this action. In connection with those charges, plaintiff was represented by the Office of the Northern District of New York Federal Public Defender. [Dkt. No. 36-4 at 3](#).

Plaintiff's amended complaint challenges the adequacy of the law library at the CCF, alleging that it is missing certain court resources and fails to comply with both constitutional and state mandated standards. See generally [Dkt. No. 12](#). On August 2, 2011, while confined at the CCF, plaintiff filed a grievance, No. 11-053, concerning those allegations.² [Dkt. No. 36-5 at 4](#), 23-26. That grievance neither included any allegations against defendant Silliman, nor complained of unlawful retaliation. *Id.* Following an investigation, during which it was determined that the prison's law library met minimum New York standards, the grievance was denied on or about August 9, 2011. [Dkt. No. 36-5 at 4](#), 27-28. That denial was subsequently upheld on appeal by Williams to the New York State Commission of Correction Citizens Policy and Complaint Review Council

² Grievance No. 11-053 was one of three submitted by Williams during the course of his confinement at the CCF. [Dkt. No. 36-5 at 4](#), 35-38, 46-48. The other two complained of (1) allegedly cold temperatures experienced in his cell (No. 12-026, submitted on February 14, 2012), *id.* at 35-38; and (2) his transfer into the facility's restrictive housing unit (No. 12-049, submitted March 4, 2012), *id.* at 46-48.

("CPRCR"), on November 30, 2011.³ *Id.* at 5, 32.

In December 2011, plaintiff wrote to the Cayuga County Supreme Court law library, located in Auburn, New York, to request that a copy of a United States Supreme Court decision be sent to him at the CCF. [Dkt. No. 36-7 at 2](#); [Dkt. No. 43-2 at 3-4](#). In accordance with established protocol, instead of responding directly to the plaintiff, Jill Fandrich, the Cayuga County Supreme Court law library clerk, forwarded the request by e-mail to Missy Field, a county employee, offering to provide a copy of the decision if it could not be located online. [Dkt. No. 36-7 at 2](#), 5. Upon receiving that e-mail, Ms. Field prepared a copy of the requested U.S. Supreme Court decision and provided it to defendant Stanley Silliman, a Cayuga County Sheriff's employee, to forward to the plaintiff. [Dkt. No. 36-6 at 9](#). Defendant Silliman forwarded the decision to plaintiff, and, at the request of Ms. Field, asked plaintiff not to request legal materials directly from the Cayuga County Supreme Court law library, reminding him that the proper procedure for obtaining materials unavailable in the prison library is to submit request slips for the desired legal materials to jail personnel. *Id.* Plaintiff alleges that, following his efforts to seek legal materials from the

³ The CPCRC upheld one aspect of the plaintiff's grievance, instructing prison officials that, under state regulations, inmates are permitted to request research materials listed under the New York minimum standards from the jail directly, even if the inmate is represented by counsel. [Dkt. No. 36-5 at 32](#).

Cayuga County Supreme Court law library, defendant Silliman retaliated against him by ignoring or sabotaging his subsequent requests for legal materials. [Dkt. No. 12 at 5](#). Defendant Silliman, in contrast, denies retaliating against Williams following that incident. [Dkt. No. 36-6 at 9-10](#).

II. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff commenced this action on December 19, 2011. [Dkt. No. 1](#). As defendants, plaintiff's complaint named United States Attorney General Eric Holder and David McNulty, the United States Marshal for the Northern District of New York, as well as additional "Jane and John Does," asserting a denial of access to the courts claim, arising from the alleged insufficiency of the law library at the CCF. *See generally id.* Plaintiff's complaint and accompanying motion for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* ("IFP") were forwarded to Senior District Judge Thomas J. McAvoy for review, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A. Based upon that review, Judge McAvoy issued a decision, dated April 20, 2012, in which he granted plaintiff IFP status but dismissed his claim on the merits, with leave to replead. *See generally* [Dkt. No. 9](#).

Plaintiff subsequently filed an amended complaint on June 11, 2012. [Dkt. No. 12](#). That amended complaint again names Attorney General Holder and Marshal McNulty as defendants, reasserts his denial of access

to the courts claim, and adds a retaliation claim against defendant Silliman for allegedly ignoring his requests for legal materials after plaintiff reached out to the Cayuga County Supreme Court law library for assistance. See *generally id.* Plaintiff's amended complaint seeks recovery of \$150 million in compensatory damages and \$20 million in punitive damages against each of the named defendants. *Id.* at 8.

Upon its filing, Judge McAvoy reviewed plaintiff's amended complaint for facial sufficiency, and issued a decision, dated August 30, 2012, again holding that plaintiff's denial of access to the court claim is legally deficient in light of the fact that he was assigned counsel to represent him in the underlying criminal action. [Dkt. No. 14 at 4](#). Judge McAvoy also found, however, that, liberally construed, plaintiff's amended complaint asserts an additional claim of unlawful retaliation against defendant Silliman, who Judge McAvoy ordered added as a named defendant.⁴ *Id.* at 5.

On May 6, 2013, plaintiff filed a written request asking that the court take judicial notice of certain facts. [Dkt. No. 35](#). In addition to responding in opposition to that application, defendant has cross-moved for the entry of summary judgment dismissing plaintiff's remaining retaliation claim based

⁴ Moreover, Judge McAvoy concluded that Cayuga County Sheriff David Gould should also be added as a defendant, but that all claims against him were subject to dismissal. [Dkt. No. 14 at 3](#) n.2, 6. Plaintiff's claims against the "John and Jane Doe" defendants similarly were dismissed. *Id.* at 5 n.5, 6.

on both procedural grounds and the merits. [Dkt. No. 36](#). Plaintiff has since responded in opposition to defendant's cross-motion for summary judgment, and a reply memorandum was subsequently submitted on behalf of the defendant. Dkt. Nos. 43, 44.

The parties' cross-motions, which are now fully briefed and ripe for determination, have been referred to me for the issuance of a report and recommendation, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B) and Northern District of New York Local Rule 72.3(c). See Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b).

III. DISCUSSION

A. Plaintiff's Motion for Judicial Notice

Judicial notice is governed Rule 201 of the Federal Rules of Evidence, which provides as follows:

(b) Kinds of Facts That May Be Judicially Noticed. The court may judicially notice a fact that is not subject to reasonable dispute because it:

(1) is generally known within the trial court's territorial jurisdiction; or

(2) can be accurately and readily determined from sources whose accuracy cannot reasonably be questioned.

Fed. R. Evid. 201(b); *see also Int'l Star Class Yacht Racing Ass'n v. Tommy Hilfiger U.S.A., Inc.*, 146 F.3d 66, 70 (2d Cir. 1998). "Because the effect of judicial notice is to deprive a party of the opportunity to use rebuttal

evidence, cross-examination, and argument to attack contrary evidence, caution must be used in determining that a fact is beyond controversy under Rule 201(b)." *Int'l Star Class Yacht Racing Ass'n*, 146 F.3d at 70.

Plaintiff's motion for judicial notice contains both factual and legal assertions. See generally [Dkt. No. 35](#). Judicial notice, however, is not intended as a vehicle for advancing legal principles. See, e.g., *Toth v. Grand Trunk R.R.*, 306 F.3d 335, 349 (6th Cir. 2002) ("[J]udicial notice is generally not the appropriate means to establish the legal principles governing the case."). With respect to the factual assertions of which the plaintiff seeks the court to take judicial notice, they principally relate to the denial of access to the court cause of action that has been dismissed by the court.⁵ For this reason, plaintiff's request for judicial notice is

⁵ For example, plaintiff requests the court take judicial notice of the following:

7. That a general provision allows for federal detainee[s] to have access to an adequate law library and/or legal assistance program, or someone trained in the law, to provide help with legal materials in preparation of a possible trial and/or enable access to courts
10. . . . Petitioner also sought federal reference materials in the law library, only to discover that the library was devoid of federal statutory and case law. That the only books available were those to accommodate state level prisoners[]
12. Petitioner, Ronald-Edward:Williams, was a prisoner at the Cayuga County Jail. Williams wishes to

inappropriate.

Mindful of my obligation to liberally construe a *pro se* litigant's papers, I find that it is possible that plaintiff's motion for judicial notice may be also be construed as a request for reconsideration of the court's prior order dismissing his court access claims.⁶ Judge McAvoy's decision dismissing that claim was issued on August 30, 2012. [Dkt. No. 14 at 5](#), 6. With respect to motions for reconsideration, this court's local rules provide that,

[u]nless Fed. R. Civ. P. 60 otherwise governs, a party may file and serve a motion for reconsideration or reargument no later than **FOURTEEN DAYS** after the entry of the challenged judgment, order, or decree.

N.D.N.Y. L.R. 7.1(g) (emphasis in original). Accordingly, plaintiff's motion, if deemed as constituting a request for reconsideration of the court's order dated August 30, 2012, is untimely.

In addition to being untimely, plaintiff's motion fails on the merits. A

bring suit alleging in his argue [sic] that limitations on the legal resources to him and other prisoners at the Cayuga County Jail had unconstitutionally restricted their access for & to the courts, thus violating all involved Fourteenth Amendment rights.

[Dkt. No. 35 at 3-4.](#)

⁶ To the extent that plaintiff's application could also be considered as requesting summary judgment, it is deficient in that it does not comply with the requirements of this court's local rules, which require, *inter alia*, the submission of a notice of motion, a supporting affidavit, and a statement of undisputed material facts. N.D.N.Y. L.R. 7.1(a).

district court may properly reconsider its previous ruling if (1) there is an intervening change in the controlling law, (2) new evidence not previously available comes to light, or (3) it becomes necessary to remedy a clear error of law or to prevent obvious injustice. *Stewart Park & Res. Coalition, Inc. v. Slater*, 374 F. Supp. 2d 243, 253 (N.D.N.Y. 2005) (Treece, M.J.). The standard for granting a motion for reconsideration is strict. *Shrader v. CSX Transp., Inc.*, 70 F.3d 255, 257 (2d Cir. 1995). The Second Circuit has made clear that motions for reconsideration "should not be granted where the moving party seeks solely to relitigate an issue already decided." *Shrader*, 70 F.3d at 257.

In this instance, plaintiff has provided no basis for the court to conclude there has been any intervening change in the controlling law, that new evidence now exists that was not previously available to him, or that there is a demonstrable need to correct clear or error of law to prevent manifest injustice. Accordingly, to the extent that plaintiff's application for judicial notice could be construed as a motion for reconsideration under the local rules of this court, I recommend that it be denied.⁷

⁷ To the extent that Rule 60 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure may apply, plaintiff's motion does not cite to that provision, nor does it rely upon any of the grounds on which a motion for reconsideration under that statute may be granted. More specifically, Rule 60 provides that,

[o]n motion and just terms, the court may relieve a party . . .

B. Defendant's Motion for Summary Judgment

1. Legal Standard Governing Motions for Summary Judgment

Summary judgment motions are governed by Rule 56 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Under that provision, the entry of summary judgment is warranted "if the movant shows that there is no genuine dispute as to any material facts and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law." Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(a); see *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 322 (1986); *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 247 (1986); *Sec. Ins. Co. of Hartford v. Old Dominion Freight Line, Inc.*, 391 F.3d 77, 82-83 (2d Cir. 2004). A fact is "material" for purposes of this inquiry, if it "might affect the outcome of the suit under the governing law." *Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 248; see also *Jeffreys v. City of New York*, 426 F.3d 549, 553 (2d Cir. 2005) (citing *Anderson*). A material fact is genuinely in dispute "if the evidence is

from a judgment, order, or proceeding for the following reasons:

- (1) mistake, inadvertence, surprise, or excusable neglect;
- (2) newly discovered evidence . . . ;
- (3) fraud . . . , misrepresentation, or misconduct by an opposing party; . . . [or]
- (6) any other reason that justifies relief.

Fed. R. Civ. P. 60. Plaintiff's motion merely realleges the same facts as those considered by the court in its decisions reviewing the facial sufficiency of his original and amended complaints. Thus, to the extent plaintiff's motion for judicial notice can be construed as a motion to reconsider pursuant to Rule 60, I recommend it be denied.

such that a reasonable jury could return a verdict for the nonmoving party." *Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 248.

A party moving for summary judgment bears an initial burden of demonstrating that there is no genuine dispute of material fact to be decided with respect to any essential element of the claim in issue, and the failure to meet this burden warrants denial of the motion. *Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 250 n.4; *Sec. Ins. Co.*, 391 F.3d at 83. In the event this initial burden is met, the opposing party must show, through affidavits or otherwise, that there is a material dispute of fact for trial. Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(e); *Celotex*, 477 U.S. at 324; *Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 250.

When deciding a summary judgment motion, a court must resolve any ambiguities, and draw all inferences, in a light most favorable to the nonmoving party. *Jeffreys*, 426 F.3d at 553; *Wright v. Coughlin*, 132 F.3d 133, 137-38 (2d Cir. 1998). The entry of summary judgment is justified only in the event of a finding that no reasonable trier of fact could rule in favor of the non-moving party. *Bldg. Trades Employers' Educ. Ass'n v. McGowan*, 311 F.3d 501, 507-08 (2d Cir. 2002); see also *Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 250 (finding summary judgment appropriate only when "there can be but one reasonable conclusion as to the verdict").

2. Failure to Exhaust

In support of his cross-motion for summary judgment, defendant Silliman contends that dismissal of plaintiff's complaint is warranted in light of the fact that plaintiff failed to exhaust the administrative remedies available to him at the CCF prior to filing this action. [Dkt. No. 36-1 at 20-21](#). In response, plaintiff appears to concede that he did not file a grievance while confined at the CCF regarding his allegations that defendant Silliman retaliated against him, but he argues that the grievance procedure was rendered unavailable to him due to his transfer to another facility in March 2012. [Dkt. No. 43 at 17-19](#).

The Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1996 ("PLRA"), Pub. L. No. 104-134, 110 Stat. 1321 (1996), which imposes several restrictions on the ability of prisoners to maintain federal civil rights actions, expressly requires that "[n]o action shall be brought with respect to prison conditions under section 1983 of this title, or any other Federal law, by a prisoner confined in any jail, prison, or other correctional facility until such administrative remedies as are available are exhausted." 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a); see also *Woodford v. Ngo*, 548 U.S. 81, 84 (2006) ("Exhaustion is . . . mandatory. Prisoners must now exhaust all 'available' remedies[.]"); *Hargrove v. Riley*,

No. 04-CV-4587, 2007 WL 389003, at *5-6 (E.D.N.Y. Jan. 31, 2007) ("The exhaustion requirement is a mandatory condition precedent to any suit challenging prison conditions, including suits brought under Section 1983.").⁸ "[T]he PLRA's exhaustion requirement applies to all inmate suits about prison life, whether they involve general circumstances or particular episodes, and whether they allege excessive force or some other wrong." *Porter v. Nussle*, 534 U.S. 516, 532 (2002).

The failure of a prisoner to satisfy the PLRA's exhaustion requirement is an affirmative defense that must be raised by a defendant in response to an inmate suit.⁹ *Jones v. Block*, 549 U.S. 199, 212 (2007). In the event the defendant establishes that the inmate plaintiff failed "to fully complete[] the administrative review process" prior to commencing the action, the plaintiff's complaint is subject to dismissal. *Pettus v. McCoy*, No. 04-CV-0471, 2006 WL 2639369, at *1 (N.D.N.Y. Sept. 13, 2006) (McAvoy, J.); see also *Woodford*, 548 U.S. at 93 ("[W]e are persuaded that the PLRA exhaustion requirement requires proper exhaustion."). "Proper exhaustion" requires a plaintiff to procedurally exhaust his claims by

⁸ All unreported decisions cited to in this report have been appended for the convenience of the *pro se* plaintiff.

⁹ In this case, defendant Silliman timely asserted failure to exhaust as an affirmative defense in his answer to plaintiff's amended complaint. [Dkt. No. 17 at 3.](#)

"compl[ying] with the system's critical procedural rules." *Woodford*, 548 U.S. at 95; see also *Macias v. Zenk*, 495 F.3d 37, 43 (2d Cir. 2007) (citing *Woodford*).

The sole remaining claim in this action arises from plaintiff's allegation that, after he contacted the Cayuga County Supreme Court law library directly, defendant Silliman retaliated against him by denying him access to legal materials. [Dkt. No. 12 at 5](#). There is no record evidence now before the court that suggests plaintiff filed a grievance complaining of retaliation on the part of defendant Stillman. The record does reflect, however, that plaintiff filed a grievance concerning the adequacy of the legal materials available at the CCF. Dkt. No. 22-26. Because that grievance was submitted on August 2, 2011, it could not be even liberally construed to refer to a retaliation claim against defendant Silliman, which plaintiff alleges occurred after he sent his letter to the Cayuga County Supreme Court law library in December 2011. [Dkt. No. 12 at 5](#); [Dkt. No. 36-6 at 8-9](#).

Accordingly, I find that plaintiff failed to exhaust available administrative remedies prior to commencing this action.¹⁰

¹⁰ It is worth noting that, in his response to defendant's cross-motion for summary judgment, plaintiff does not assert that he, in fact, exhausted the available administrative remedies regarding his retaliation claim against defendant Silliman. [Dkt. No. 43 at 17-19](#). Moreover, the other two grievances filed by plaintiff while confined at the CCF do not involve any allegations regarding defendant Silliman's retaliatory conduct. [Dkt. No. 36-5 at 35-38](#), 46-48.

Plaintiff's failure to exhaust, however, does not warrant dismissal of his complaint without further inquiry. In a series of decisions rendered since enactment of the PLRA, the Second Circuit has prescribed a three-part test for determining whether dismissal of an inmate plaintiff's complaint is warranted for failure to satisfy the PLRA's exhaustion requirement. See, e.g., *Hemphill v. New York*, 380 F.3d 680, 686 (2d Cir. 2004); see also *Macias*, 495 F.3d at 41. Those decisions instruct that, before dismissing an action as a result of a plaintiff's failure to exhaust, a court must first determine whether the administrative remedies were available to the plaintiff at the relevant times. *Macias*, 495 F.3d at 41; *Hemphill*, 380 F.3d at 686. In the event of a finding that a remedy existed and was available, the court must next examine whether the defendant has forfeited the affirmative defense of non-exhaustion by failing to properly raise or preserve it, or whether, through his own actions preventing the exhaustion of plaintiff's remedies, he should be estopped from asserting failure to exhaust as a defense. *Id.* In the event the exhaustion defense survives these first two levels of scrutiny, the court must examine whether the plaintiff has plausibly alleged special circumstances to justify his failure to comply with the applicable administrative procedure requirements. *Id.*

In this instance, the record fails to reveal any basis on which plaintiff's

failure to exhaust could be excused under *Hemphill* and its progeny. A comprehensive inmate grievance policy exists at the CCF. [Dkt. No. 36-5 at 3-4](#), 15-18. That grievance policy is set forth in an inmate handbook, a copy of which plaintiff acknowledged receiving upon being processed into the prison, regarding policies and procedures at the CCF. *Id.* at 15-18, 20. Plaintiff was familiar with that grievance process, and knew it was available to him, as evidenced by the three grievances he filed while incarcerated at the CCF. *Id.* at 22-26, 35-38, 46-48.

In his response to the pending motion, plaintiff contends that the grievance process was not available to him because he was transferred out of the CCF on March 26, 2012. [Dkt. No. 43 at 18](#). His transfer on that date, however, has no bearing on whether the grievance procedures in place at the CCF were available to him at the times relevant to this action. Pursuant to the grievance procedure in place at CCF, a grievance must be filed within five days of the date of the act or occurrence giving rise to the grievance. [Dkt. No. 36-5 at 16](#). While his complaint does not specifically identify the date(s) on which defendant Silliman allegedly retaliated against him, it is clear from the record that it occurred after he received the legal materials he requested from the Cayuga County Supreme Court law library in December 2011. [Dkt. No. 36-6 at 8-9](#); [Dkt. No. 36-7 at 2](#), 5; [Dkt. No. 12](#)

[at 5](#). Plaintiff has failed to allege any facts suggesting that defendant Silliman's alleged retaliatory conduct occurred so close to his transfer date in March 2012, that the established grievance process at the CCF was rendered unavailable to him. Instead, plaintiff's complaint, which is virtually the only evidence in the record to even suggest retaliation by defendant Silliman, vaguely alleges that defendant Silliman retaliated against plaintiff some time after he received the U.S. Supreme Court case he had requested from the law library.¹¹ [Dkt. No. 12 at 5](#). Without more, and mindful that plaintiff filed three grievances in August 2011, February 2012, and March 2012 while confined at the CCF, I conclude that the grievance process was available to him during the times relevant to his

¹¹ To be clear, the following allegations constitute plaintiff's entire basis for the retaliation claim against defendant Silliman:

9. Scilliman [sic] claimed that since Plaintiff was 'pro se'. . ., that he needn't request their help because he himself could fulfill whatever legal request Plaintiff desired, and proceeds to hand Plaintiff the requested material that was requested from the outside library. Thereafter, meeting with Corporal Scilliman [sic] became a major production. When making requests, he would provide materials with missing pages or wouldn't know how to research cases and/or just didn't care. His objective was accomplished just as long as Plaintiff did not make contact with an outside source. Plaintiff believes that after Plaintiff attempted to request help from an outside source, but circumstances had worked to seriously curtail his means of assistance, Corporal Scilliman [sic] retaliated against him by ignoring Plaintiff's requests altogether when made.

[Dkt. No. 12 at 5](#).

claim against defendant Silliman.

With respect to the two other grounds upon which a plaintiff may be excused for failing to exhaust the available administrative remedies prior to filing suit, no facts are alleged in either plaintiff's amended complaint or in his opposition to defendant's motion to suggest that the defendant should be estopped from raising failure to exhaust as an affirmative defense, or that special circumstances exist excusing him from filing a grievance concerning the alleged retaliation by defendant Silliman. See *generally* Dkt. Nos. 12, 43.

In sum, the uncontradicted evidence now before the court reflects that plaintiff failed to comply with the PLRA requirement that he exhaust available administrative remedies before filing this action, and that there is no basis to excuse that failure. Accordingly, I recommend that plaintiff's remaining claim be dismissed on this procedural basis.

3. Merits of Plaintiff's Retaliation Claim

As an alternative ground for dismissal, defendant Silliman contends that, based upon the record now before the court, no reasonable factfinder could conclude that he unlawfully retaliated against Williams for having directly contacted personnel at the Cayuga County Supreme Court law library. [Dkt. No. 36-1 at 16-19](#).

A cognizable section 1983 retaliation claim lies when prison officials take adverse action against an inmate that is motivated by the inmate's exercise of a constitutional right, including the free speech provisions of the First Amendment. See *Friedl v. City of New York*, 210 F.3d 79, 85 (2d Cir. 2000) ("In general, a section 1983 claim will lie where the government takes negative action against an individual because of his exercise of rights guaranteed by the Constitution or federal laws."). The Second Circuit has cautioned, however, that, because of "the ease with which claims of retaliation may be fabricated," courts should "examine prisoners' claims of retaliation with skepticism and particular care." *Colon v. Coughlin*, 58 F.3d 865, 872 (2d Cir. 1995); accord, *Davis v. Goord*, 320 F.3d 346, 352 (2d Cir. 2003).

To establish a claim under section 1983 for unlawful retaliation, a plaintiff must prove that (1) the conduct prompting the retaliatory acts was protected, (2) the defendants took adverse action against the plaintiff, and (3) there was a causal connection between the protected activity and the adverse action – in other words, that the protected conduct was a "substantial or motivating factor" in the prison officials' decision to take action against the plaintiff. *Mount Healthy City Sch. Dist. Bd. of Educ. v. Doyle*, 429 U.S. 274, 287 (1977); *Dillon v. Morano*, 497 F.3d 247, 251 (2d

Cir. 2007); *Garrett v. Reynolds*, No. 99-CV-2065, 2003 WL 22299359, at *4 (N.D.N.Y. Oct. 3, 2003) (Sharpe, M.J.). "[P]rison officials' conduct constitutes an 'adverse action' when it 'would deter a similarly situated individual of ordinary firmness from exercising his or her constitutional rights.'" *Alicea v. Howell*, 387 F. Supp. 2d 227, 237 (W.D.N.Y. 2005) (quoting *Dawes v. Walker*, 239 F.3d 489, 492 (2d Cir. 2001)).

In a case such as this, analysis of retaliation claims typically turns upon whether there is evidence tending to link the protected activity in which the inmate plaintiff has engaged and the adverse action allegedly taken against him by the defendant. When such claims, which are exceedingly case specific, are alleged in only conclusory fashion, and are not supported by evidence establishing the requisite nexus between any protected activity and the adverse action complained of, a defendant is entitled to the entry of summary judgment dismissing plaintiff's retaliation claims. *Flaherty v. Coughlin*, 713 F.2d 10, 13 (2d Cir. 1983). Such is the case here.

Plaintiff's claim of retaliation is set forth in his amended complaint in only conclusory fashion, alleging that,

after Plaintiff attempted to request help from an outside source, but circumstances had worked to seriously curtail is means of assistance, Corporal Scilliman [sic] retaliated against him by ignoring Plaintiff's requests altogether when made.

[Dkt. No. 12 at 5](#). Aside from those allegations, there is no record evidence to support plaintiff's claim.

In support of his motion, defendant Silliman submitted an affidavit in which he denies retaliating against the plaintiff and emphasizes that he had no incentive or motivation to retaliate based upon plaintiff's actions. [Dkt. No. 36-6 at 9-10](#). Indeed, defendant Silliman highlights that, after receiving the CPRCR's decision with respect to plaintiff's grievance from August 2011, CCF personnel "began processing all requests for all research materials regardless of whether the requesting inmate was represented by an attorney. That, of course, included [plaintiff]." *Id.* at 8. Plaintiff's response in opposition to the pending motion focuses upon his claim that the law library at the CCF is constitutionally deficient, and fails to offer anything of evidentiary nature that would support the otherwise wholly conclusory allegations contained in his amended complaint concerning retaliation. See generally [Dkt. No. 43](#). As it relates to the retaliation claim asserted against defendant Silliman, plaintiff's response contains only the following argument:

Here Plaintiff alleges that soonafter [sic] filing a grievance against the law library that's run and supervised by the defendant, all assistance stopped! Notwithstanding after being told not to write the Cayuga County Law Library without any reason given as to why, defendant stated to Plaintiff that in

good faith he would supply all his legal necessities. Subsequently, Plaintiff's notice of the present lawsuit became evident when the court clerk notified the jail through facsimile of the pending stipulation. To compel upon the retaliatory matter further, defendant used his influence to have Plaintiff transferred.

Id. at 16. Accordingly, even assuming, without deciding, that plaintiff engaged in protected conduct by reaching out to the Cayuga County Supreme Court law library, and that plaintiff can establish, despite defendant Silliman's denial, that the defendant refused Williams' subsequent requests for library assistance, the plaintiff has set forth no evidence to provide the necessary causal link between the two. For example, as noted above in connection with the exhaustion analysis, nothing in the record establishes a timeframe for the alleged retaliatory conduct, which precludes the court from concluding that plaintiff has established a temporal proximity between the protected activity and the alleged adverse action. Based upon this failure of proof, I conclude that plaintiff has failed to carry his burden of establishing the existence of a genuine dispute of material fact precluding the entry of summary judgment dismissing his retaliation claim. For that reason, I recommend that summary judgment be granted, dismissing plaintiff's remaining retaliation claim against defendant Silliman on the merits.

IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Despite his apparent belief otherwise, plaintiff's sole remaining claim in this action alleges that defendant Silliman retaliated against him due to his direct request from an outside source for legal materials not available to him at the CCF. To the extent that plaintiff requests the court take judicial notice of facts addressing a denial of access to the courts cause of action, that motion should be denied on the basis that Judge McAvoy previously dismissed that claim. Turning to defendant's motion, I find that dismissal of plaintiff's remaining claim is appropriate based on his failure to file a grievance and pursue that grievance to completion before commencing this suit, and the finding that no reasonable factfinder could conclude, based upon the record now before the court, that defendant Silliman unlawfully retaliated against the plaintiff. Accordingly, it is hereby respectfully

RECOMMENDED that plaintiff's motion for judicial notice ([Dkt. No. 35](#)) be DENIED; and it is further

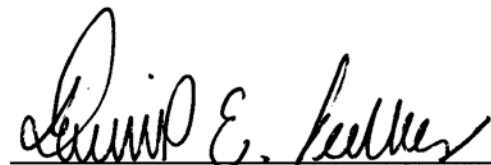
RECOMMENDED that defendant's cross-motion for summary judgment ([Dkt. No. 36](#)) be GRANTED, and that all remaining claims in this action be dismissed in their entirety.

NOTICE: Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1), the parties may lodge written objections to the foregoing report. Such objections must be filed with the clerk of the court within FOURTEEN days of service of this report. FAILURE TO SO OBJECT TO THIS REPORT WILL PRECLUDE APPELLATE REVIEW. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(a), 6(d), 72; *Roldan v. Racette*, 984 F.2d 85 (2d Cir. 1993).

It is hereby respectfully ORDERED that the clerk of the court serve a copy of this report and recommendation upon the parties in accordance with this court's local rules; and it is further

ORDERED that the clerk correct the spelling of defendant Silliman's last name on the court's records in this action.

Dated: February 18, 2013
Syracuse, New York



David E. Peebles
U.S. Magistrate Judge

Not Reported in F.Supp.2d, 2007 WL 389003 (E.D.N.Y.)
(Cite as: 2007 WL 389003 (E.D.N.Y.))

Background

C Only the Westlaw citation is currently available.

United States District Court,
E.D. New York.
Wayne HARGROVE, Plaintiff,
v.
Sheriff Edward RILEY; Nassau County Correctional
Facility, et al; Nassau County University Medical Staff
and Nassau County Correctional Facility, Defendants.
Civil Action No. CV-04-4587 (DGT).

Jan. 31, 2007.

Wayne Hargrove, Ossining, NY, pro se.

[Alexander V. Sansone](#), Troy & Troy, Lake Ronkonkoma,
NY, [Joseph Carney](#), Mineola, NY, for Defendants.

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

[TRAGER](#), J.

*1 Inmate Wayne Hargrove ("Hargrove" or "plaintiff") brings this *pro se* action pursuant to [42 U.S.C. § 1983](#) against the Nassau County Sheriff, Nassau County Correctional Facility ("NCCF") and NCCF's medical staff, (collectively, "defendants"), seeking damages for injuries allegedly caused by defendants while he was incarcerated at NCCF. Defendants now move for summary judgment pursuant to [Fed.R.Civ.P. 56](#) arguing, *inter alia*, that Hargrove's claims should be dismissed because he failed to exhaust administrative remedies, as required by the Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1995 ("PLRA"), [42 U.S.C. § 1997e](#). For the following reasons, defendants' motions for summary judgment are granted.

On August 27, 2004,^{[FN1](#)} Hargrove filed a complaint, alleging that defendants violated his civil rights when they forcibly administered purified protein derivative skin tests ("PPD test") to test for latent [tuberculosis](#) ("TB") in April 2002, 2003 and 2004 while he was incarcerated at NCCF. Complaint, Ex. C; Aff. in Opp. at 1-4, Ex. A. Hargrove named Nassau County Sheriff Edward Reilly ("Reilly"), NCCF and Nassau County University Medical Staff^{[FN2](#)} as defendants.^{[FN3](#)} On November 22, 2004, after discovery, County Defendants and NHCC Defendants filed separate motions for summary judgment pursuant to [Fed.R.Civ.P. 56](#). Both defendants properly filed a Local Rule 56.1 Statement and served Hargrove a Notice to *Pro Se* Litigant Opposing Motion for Summary Judgment, pursuant to [Local Civil Rule 56.2](#).

[FN1](#). Hargrove signed the complaint August 27, 2004. The *pro se* clerk's office received and filed the complaint on September 20, 2004. Under the prison mail-box rule, a *pro se* prisoner's complaint is deemed filed when it is delivered to prison authorities. See, e.g., [Walker v. Jastremski](#), 430 F.3d 560, 562 (2d Cir.2005)(deeming *pro se* prisoner's [§ 1983](#) action filed on date complaint was handed to prison officials). There is no evidence in the record as to when Hargrove handed the complaint to prison officials. However, it is clear the operative date is between August 27, 2004 and September 20, 2004. As discussed, *infra*, both of these dates occur before Hargrove properly exhausted the administrative remedies available to him at NCCF.

[FN2](#). The Nassau County University Medical Staff are employed by the Nassau Health Care Corporation ("NHCC"). Pursuant to the Correctional Center Health Services Agreement between the County of Nassau and NHCC, dated September 24, 1999, NHCC provides medical services for inmates at NCCF. County Defs.'s

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Not. of Motion, Decl., at 1.

[FN3](#). Reilly and NCCF are represented separately from NHCC. Accordingly, when a distinction is necessary, Reilly and NCCF will be referred to as “County Defendants” and Nassau County University Medical Staff and NHCC will be referred to as “NHCC Defendants.”

(1)

Tuberculosis Testing at NCCF

Upon entering NCCF, new prisoners must first go through medical intake. Aff. of Kim Edwards, (“Edwards Aff.”) ¶ 3. This standard process usually takes seventy-two hours. Edwards Aff. ¶ 4. During medical intake, NCCF tests inmates for TB. Aff. of Getachew Feleke (“Feleke Aff.”) ¶ 3. NCCF generally uses a PPD test to detect latent TB. Feleke Aff. ¶ 3. However, if an inmate has previously tested positive for TB, it is NCCF's policy to test for TB using an x-ray instead. [FN4](#) Feleke Aff. ¶ 3. As part of its Infectious Disease Program, NCCF re-tests inmates for TB each year, beginning after they have been housed in that facility for one year. Edwards Aff. ¶ 5.

[FN4](#). According to WebMD, “[a] tuberculin skin test should not be done for people who have a (1) Known TB infection [or a] (2) Positive tuberculin skin test in the past. A second test may cause a more severe reaction to the TB antigens.” Jan Nissl, RN, BS, *Tuberculin Skin Tests*, W E B M D , h t t p : / / www.webmd.com/hw/lab_tests/hw203560.asp (last visited Jan. 31, 2007).

(2)

Hargrove's Tuberculosis Testing at NCCF

On March 15, 2002, Hargrove was incarcerated at NCCF.

NHCC Defs.' 56.1 Statement ¶ 1. Before entering the general population, Hargrove was processed through medical intake. NHCC Defs.' 56.1 Statement ¶ 2. The NCCF Medical Intake Chart for Hargrove, dated March 15, 2002 (“3/15/02 Chart”), shows that Hargrove informed medical staff that he had previously been exposed to [tuberculosis](#). NHCC Defs.' Notice of Mot., Ex. C, at 1; NHCC Defs.' 56.1 Statement ¶ 2. The 3/15/02 Chart also shows that Hargrove reported testing positive to a prior PPD test and that he had been treated for TB in 2000. NHCC Defs.' Notice of Mot., Ex. C, at 1. Hargrove alleges that he was exposed to and treated for TB in 1997. Hargrove's Aff. in Opp. to Mot. for Summary Judgment, (“Aff. in Opp.”), Ex. A at 1-2. Defendants contend that Hargrove was given an x-ray during the medical intake process because of his reported positive PPD test, and that the x-ray was negative, showing no active TB infection. NHCC Defs.' 56.1 Statement ¶ 2; Edwards Aff. ¶ 3. Without specifying a date, Hargrove generally states that his “request to be x-rayed was denied.” Aff. in Opp. at 3.

*2 Pursuant to NCCF's Infectious Disease Program, after being incarcerated in NCCF for a year, Hargrove was scheduled to be re-tested for TB. Edwards Aff. ¶ 5; NHCC Defs.' 56.1 Statement ¶ 4. On May 24, 2003, Hargrove was given a PPD skin test. Edwards Aff. ¶ 5; NHCC Defs.' 56.1 Statement ¶ 4. This test was negative. Edwards Aff. ¶ 5; NHCC Defs.' 56.1 Statement ¶ 4. According to Hargrove, he requested an x-ray instead of a PPD test because of his previous exposure to TB, but was forced to submit to the PPD test. He also alleges that defendants threatened to put him in “keep lock” or “lock up” unless he submitted to the PPD test. [FN5](#) Complaint, Ex. C; Aff. in Opp. at 1-4, Ex. A.

[FN5](#). Hargrove has made contradictory statements about being placed in “keep lock” or “lock up”. It is unclear whether he is alleging that defendants threatened to place him in “lock up” unless he submitted to the PPD test or whether he was actually placed in “lock up” until such time that he agreed to submit to the PPD tests. For example, in his complaint, Hargrove states that when he “refused to submit to another [PPD] test, the Correctional Authorities were brought in and placed [him] in lock up.” Complaint ¶ 4. In a hearing before Magistrate Judge Bloom on

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January 31, 2005, Hargrove stated that he took the PPD tests because he was told that he would be placed in “lock up” until he submitted to the test. Hr’g Tr. 6:1-18; 9:5-10:10. In Exhibit B to his complaint, Hargrove alleges both that he was given an unwarranted TB shot and that when he refused the same shot he was placed in “keep lock.” Complaint, Ex. B. There is no evidence in the record that Hargrove was ever segregated from the general population while housed at NCCF, outside of the seventy-two hour initial medical intake period. Aff. of Sgt. Neumann (“Neumann Aff.”) at 1-2 (referring to prison records showing Hargrove’s holding locations which demonstrate that he was never placed in “lock up”); NCCF 56.1 Statement ¶ E. Whether or not Hargrove was actually placed in “lock up” is not a material fact for purposes of this motion; as explained in detail, *infra*, Hargrove’s failure to exhaust administrative remedies under the PLRA precludes a consideration of the merits of his [Section 1983](#) claim.

The following year, in June of 2004, Hargrove was scheduled to be retested. Edwards Aff. ¶ 6; NHCC Defs.’ 56.1 Statement ¶ 5. Because of the contradiction between the negative May 2003 PPD test and his reported positive history, NCCF contacted the Infectious Disease Department of the Nassau County Medical Center. Edwards Aff. ¶ 6. It was suggested that Hargrove be given a two-step PPD test, administered fifteen days apart. Feleke Aff. ¶ 4; Edwards Aff. ¶ 6. Hargrove was given these two PPD skin tests in June 2004. Edwards Aff. ¶ 6; NHCC Defs.’ 56.1 Statement ¶ 5. Again, Hargrove alleges that these tests were administered against his will and under threat of being placed in quarantine. Complaint, Exs. A, B; Aff. in Opp., Ex. A.

On December 3, 2004, Hargrove was seen by a physician’s assistant. NHCC Defs.’ 56.1 Statement ¶ 6. During this meeting, Hargrove complained of a dry cough and that the site on his forearm where the June 2004 PPD tests had been administered was red and swollen. NHCC Defs.’ 56.1 Statement ¶ 6; 11/28/04 Sick Call Request.

Hargrove’s December 18, 2004 chart notes a positive PPD

test and an order was placed in the chart that Hargrove not be submitted for future PPD tests. Edwards Aff. ¶ 7; NHCC Defs.’ 56.1 Statement ¶ 8. *See also* 11/19/2004 Grievance.

Hargrove alleges that the following physical ailments were caused by the PPD tests: chronic coughing, [high blood pressure](#), chronic back pain, [lung infection](#), dizzy spells, blurred vision and a permanent scar on both his forearms. Complaint, Ex. C; Aff. in Opp. at 3-4.

(3)

NCCF’s Inmate Grievance Procedure

NCCF has had an inmate grievance program (“IGP”) in place since 2001. Aff. of Kenneth Williams, (“Williams Aff.”), at 2. NCCF’s IGP is carried out in conformance with the New York State Commission of Corrections Minimum Standards and Regulations for Management of County Jails and Penitentiaries (“Minimum Standards”). *Id.*

The IGP is designed to resolve complaints and grievances that an inmate may have regarding the inmate’s care and treatment while incarcerated at NCCF. Williams Aff. at 2. Upon entering NCCF, all inmates receive a copy of the NCCF inmate handbook, which outlines the IGP. *Id.*

*3 The record does not include an actual copy of NCCF’s IGP, but the NCCF’s IGP is detailed in the affidavit of NCCF Investigator Kenneth Williams. [FN6](#) The IGP encourages inmates to resolve their grievances informally with the staff member assigned to the inmate housing unit first. *Id.* If an acceptable resolution cannot be reached, inmates must then proceed through the formal three-step process set out in the IGP. *Id.* at 3.

[FN6.](#) Hargrove does dispute any statements made by Investigator Williams regarding the inmate grievance procedure, time limits or its availability to him. Furthermore, Hargrove does

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not dispute that he received a handbook outlining the IGP.

The first step requires an inmate to submit his grievance form [FN7](#) to the Inmate Grievance Unit by placing it in a locked box located in each housing area, “within five days of the date of the act or occurrence giving rise to the grievance.” [FN8](#) *Id.* at 2-3. NCCF indexes all grievance forms filed by inmates in a log book and in a computer system. *Id.* at 1, 3. Once a grievance form is received by the Inmate Grievance Unit, the grievance is investigated and the inmate will receive a written determination of the outcome from the Inmate Grievance Coordinator in Section II of the grievance form. [FN9](#) *Id.* at 3. The inmate is then given a choice to accept or appeal the decision by checking the desired selection and signing his name in Section III of the grievance form. *See, e.g.*, 11/19/2004 Grievance form. If the inmate is not satisfied with the decision of the Inmate Grievance Coordinator, the inmate may appeal the determination to the Chief Administrative Officer. Williams Aff. at 3. Finally, if the inmate is not satisfied with the Chief Administrative Officer's determination, the inmate may appeal to the New York State Commission of Correction Citizen's Policy and Complaint Review Council (“Council”). *Id.* at 3. The Council will then render a final determination. *Id.* at 3.

[FN7](#). The grievance forms contain four sections to be utilized throughout all three steps of the IGP. Section I provides space for the inmate to explain his complaint and the actions he requests as relief. Section II is for the decision of the Inmate Grievance Coordinator. Section III is titled “Acceptance/Appeal of Grievance Coordinator's decision” and contains two mutually exclusive options in which the inmate must choose one or the other: “I have read and accept the Grievance Coordinator's decision,” or “I have read and appeal the Grievance Coordinator's decision.” Section IV provides space for the decision of the Chief Administrative Officer.

[FN8](#). Hargrove has not argued that he was unaware of this five-day deadline.

[FN9](#). There is no evidence in the record specifying the how long an inmate has to appeal inaction by the Inmate Grievance Unit.

(4)

Authenticity of the Grievance Forms and Other Documents Submitted by Hargrove

In support of his allegations that he continuously informed defendants that he had been exposed to TB and, therefore, should not have been given PPD tests, Hargrove submitted three letters with his complaint, two of which were addressed to the Inmate Grievance Committee and one of which was addressed to “To whom this may concern.” Complaint, Exs. A-C. He also submitted five complaint letters written to Sheriff Reilly, seventeen sick call requests and nine grievance forms during discovery and with his Affidavit in Opposition to Defendants' Motion for Summary Judgment, explaining that some of the medical records and notarized letters were “missing.” Aff. in Opp, Ex. A at 2. Defendants call the authenticity of most of these documents into question, contending that Hargrove never submitted any grievance form or complaint letter before he filed his complaint. County Defs.' Mem. of Law at 16-21; County Defs.' 56.1 Statement at ¶¶ B2, C3, D3.

Kenneth Williams, an investigator at NCCF in the Inmate Grievance Unit, testified that he reviewed all of the grievance forms, complaint letters and sick call requests annexed to Hargrove's Complaint and to Hargrove's Affidavit in Opposition to Defendants' Motion for Summary Judgment. Williams Aff. at 2. Williams testified that he examined the grievance records at NCCF and searched “for any grievances by plaintiff/inmate Hargrove” and found “only two.” [FN10](#) Williams Aff. at 1. The first grievance, dated November 19, 2004, complained that the medical staff continued “forcing [Hargrove] to take a T.B. shot while [he] keep[s] telling them that [he] has been exposed to T.B.” 11/19/2004 Grievance; Williams Aff. at 1. In response to this grievance, Hargrove's “positive” TB status was noted in his medical records and an order was placed in Hargrove's medical chart, stating that Hargrove not be subjected to future PPD tests. 11/19/2004 Grievance, Section II;

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Williams Aff. at 1; NHCC Defs.' 56.1 Statement ¶ 8; Edwards Aff. ¶ 7. In Section III of the 11/19/2004 Grievance, Hargrove acknowledged that he had read the Grievance Coordinator's decision, and that he chose to accept the decision instead of appealing it. 11/19/2004 Grievance. The other grievance received by the Grievance Unit, dated May 11, 2005, complained of an unrelated matter. 5/11/2005 Grievance (complaining of back problems and requesting the return of his medical shoes); Williams Aff. at 1. Thus, Williams concluded that, beside the 11/19/2004 and 5/11/2005 Grievance Forms, none of the other documents were "received by the grievance unit, and, given the locked box system, the grievance-forms were never submitted by plaintiff/inmate." Williams Aff. at 2.

FN10. It is NCCF's procedure to forward to the attention of the Grievance Unit all official grievance forms and complaint letters-even ones not specifically addressed to the Grievance Unit. Williams Aff. at 3.

*4 A visual examination of the grievance forms Hargrove submitted in support of his claims suggests forgery. Five of the nine grievance forms were requests to stop PPD testing. *See* April 19, 2002 grievance; April 28, 2002 grievance; April 20, 2003 grievance; April 28, 2003 grievance; November 19, 2004 grievance. The remaining grievance forms concerned Hargrove's requests for medical shoes. *See* March 18, 2002 grievance; July 6, 2002 grievance; February 20, 2003 grievance; May 11, 2005 grievance. Of the grievance forms complaining of unwanted PPD tests, the April 28, 2002 grievance form is a patent photocopy of the April 19, 2002 grievance form, and the April 28, 2003 grievance form is a patent photocopy copy of the April 20, 2003 grievance form, with only the handwritten dates changed. The only potentially authentic grievance forms relating to Hargrove's complaint about the PPD testing are dated April 19, 2002, April 20, 2003, and November 19, 2004. Of these grievance forms, only the November 19, 2004 has been authenticated by NCCF personnel. *See generally* Williams Aff. at 1-4.

Turning to the complaint letters addressed to Reilly, many contain notary stamps cut from the bottom of unrelated

documents and photocopied onto the bottom of the complaint letters. *See* County Defs.' Mem. of Law at 18-21. C.O. Thomas McDevitt and C.O. Paul Klein, both of whom perform notary services for prisoners at NCCF, have submitted sworn affidavits, stating that they kept individual Notary Log Books covering all dates relevant to this litigation. Aff. of C.O. Klein, ("Klein Aff."), at 1; Aff. of C.O. McDevitt, ("McDevitt Aff."), at 1. McDevitt's Notary Log Book shows that he notarized only one document for Hargrove. This document, dated May 13, 2002, was a motion related to Hargrove's criminal trial. McDevitt Aff. at 1-2. Hargrove signed the Notary Log Book acknowledging receipt of that notarized motion. McDevitt Aff. at 2. McDevitt states that he never notarized any other documents for Hargrove. McDevitt Aff. at 2. However, McDevitt's stamp and signature dated May 13, 2002 (the date of the legitimate notarization) appear on Hargrove's letter to Sheriff Reilly dated May 10, 2002. County Defs.' Not. of Motion, Ex. A.

These facts repeat themselves in regard to the documents bearing the notary stamp and signature of Klein. Klein had performed several legitimate notarizations for Hargrove in connection to Hargrove's criminal trial. Klein Aff. at 1-2. Hargrove signed Klein's Notary Log Book acknowledging receipt of those notarized documents. Klein Aff. at 2. However, Klein states that he never notarized any of Hargrove's letters addressed to Sheriff Reilly that bear Klein's stamp and signature. Klein Aff. at 2. On all of the documents that Hargrove submitted bearing Klein's stamp and signature, the dates and signatures of Klein match identically to the dates on which he had performed legitimate notarizations for Hargrove in connection with his criminal trial. Defendants argue it is clear that the documents bearing the stamps and signatures of McDevitt and Klein were not actually notarized by these notaries. County Defs.' Mem. of Law at 17-22.

*5 Hargrove does not deny these allegations. Instead, he resubmits the documents that McDevitt and Klein testify they did not notarize with his Affidavit in Opposition and insists that the documents "refute[] the assertions put forth by the defendants." Aff. in Opp. at 2.

Discussion

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(1)

Summary Judgment Standard

A motion for summary judgment is granted when “there is no genuine issue as to any material fact and ... the moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law.” Fed.R.Civ.P. 56(c). A court ruling on a summary judgment motion must construe the facts in the light most favorable to the non-moving party and draw all reasonable inferences in his favor. See Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc., 477 U.S. 242, 255 (1986); Williams v. Metropolitan Detention Center, 418 F.Supp.2d 96, 100 (E.D.N.Y.2005). Defendants, the moving party in this action, bear the burden of demonstrating the absence of a genuine issue of material fact. Baisch v. Gallina, 346 F.3d 366, 371 (2d Cir.2003).

As Hargrove is proceeding *pro se*, his complaint must be reviewed carefully and liberally, and be interpreted to “raise the strongest argument it suggests,” Green v. United States, 260 F.3d 78, 83 (2d Cir.2001), particularly when civil rights violations are alleged, *see, e.g., McEachin v. McGuinnis*, 357 F.3d 197, 200 (2d Cir.2004). Plaintiff's complaint does not specify the legal theories upon which it relies, but, in construing his complaint to raise its strongest arguments, it will be interpreted to raise claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. *See, e.g., Dufort v. Burgos*, No. 04-CV-4940, 2005 WL 2660384, at *2 (E.D.N.Y. Oct. 18, 2005) (liberally construing plaintiff's complaint, which failed to specify the legal theory or theories upon which it rested, as, *inter alia*, a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983); Williams, 418 F.Supp.2d at 100 (same).

(2)

Prison Litigation Reform Act

a. Purpose of the Prison Litigation Reform Act

The PLRA was intended to “reduce the quantity and improve the quality of prisoner suits.” Woodford v. Ngo,

--- U.S. ---, 126 S.Ct. 2378, 2387 (2006) (quoting Porter v. Nussle, 534 U.S. 516, 524 (2002)). It seeks to eliminate unwarranted interference with the administration of prisons by federal courts, and thus “ ‘affor[d] corrections officials time and opportunity to address complaints internally before allowing the initiation of a federal case.’ ” Woodford, 126 S.Ct. at 2387 (quoting Porter, 534 U.S. at 525). *See also Booth v. Churner*, 532 U.S. 731, 739 (2001). Formal grievance procedures allow prison officials to reconsider their policies, implement the necessary corrections and discipline prison officials who fail to follow existing policy. *See Ruggiero v. County of Orange*, 467 F.3d 170, 177-78 (2d Cir.2006).

b. The Exhaustion Requirement

The PLRA's “invigorated” exhaustion provision, 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a), provides the mechanism to reduce the quantity and improve the quality of prisoners' suits by requiring that prison officials have the opportunity to address prisoner complaints through internal processes before allowing a case to proceed in federal court. Woodford, 126 S.Ct. at 2382 (citing Porter, 534 U.S. at 524). Section 1997e(a) provides that:

*6 [n]o action shall be brought with respect to prison conditions under section 1983 of this title, or any other federal law, by a prisoner confined in any jail, or other correctional facility until such administrative remedies as are available are exhausted.

42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a).

The exhaustion requirement is a mandatory condition precedent to any suit challenging prison conditions, including suits brought under Section 1983. Woodford, 126 S.Ct. at 2383; Ruggiero, 467 F.3d at 174; Williams, 418 F.Supp.2d at 100-01. The exhaustion provision is applicable to suits seeking relief, such as money damages, that may not be available in prison administrative proceedings, as long as other forms of relief are obtainable through administrative channels. Giano v. Goord, 380 F.3d 670, 675 (2d Cir.2004); *see also Woodford*, 126 S.Ct. at 2382-83 (“[A] prisoner must now exhaust

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administrative remedies even where the relief sought-monetary damages-cannot be granted by the administrative process.”) (citing [Booth, 532 U.S. at 734](#)).

In June 2006, the Supreme Court held that the PLRA requires “proper exhaustion” before a case may proceed in federal court. [Woodford, 126 S.Ct. at 2387](#). “Proper exhaustion” requires a prisoner to use “ ‘all steps that the agency holds out, and doing so *properly* (so that the agency addresses the issues on the merits).’ ” [Ruggiero, 467 F.3d at 176](#) (citing [Woodford, 126 S.Ct. at 2385](#) (emphasis in original)). Although the level of detail necessary to properly exhaust a prison's grievance process will vary from system to system, [Jones v. Bock, 127 S.Ct. 910, 2007 WL 135890, at *12 \(Jan. 22, 2007\)](#), “proper exhaustion” under the PLRA “ ‘demands compliance with [that] agency's deadlines and other critical procedural rules.’ ” [Ruggiero, 467 F.3d at 176](#) (quoting [Woodford, 126 S.Ct. at 2386](#)). Thus, the PLRA's exhaustion requirement is not satisfied by “untimely or otherwise procedurally defective attempts to secure administrative remedies.” [Ruggiero, 467 F.3d at 176](#) (citing [Woodford, 126 S.Ct. at 2382](#)).

(3)

Exhaustion Analysis: Hargrove did not Exhaust the Administrative Remedies Made Available by NCCF prior to Bringing Suit

[Section 1997e\(a\)](#) of the PLRA applies to Hargrove's complaint; Hargrove was and continues to be confined in a correctional facility, see [Berry v. Kerik, 366 F.3d 85, 87 \(2d Cir.2004\)](#), and Hargrove's claim is about a “prison condition” within the meaning of the PLRA, see [Williams, 418 F.Supp.2d at 101](#). See also [Sloane v. W. Mazzuca, No. 04-CV-8266, 2006 WL 3096031, at *4 \(S.D.N.Y. Oct. 31, 2006\)](#) (recognizing PLRA's application to complaint alleging retaliation by prison officials for plaintiff's refusal to consent to a PPD test). Accordingly, the merits of Hargrove's [Section 1983](#) claims can only be addressed if it is first determined that Hargrove properly exhausted each claim under [Section 1997e\(a\)](#) of the PLRA before filing his complaint in federal court.

*7 Hargrove has submitted both forged [FN11](#) and authentic grievance forms in opposing defendants' motions for summary judgment. Excluding, for the moment, the forged documents, NCCF's records reflect that Hargrove did not submit his first grievance until after he filed the instant complaint. Williams Aff. at 1. Hargrove's first grievance complaining of unwanted PPD testing is dated November 19, 2004, Williams Aff. at 1, two to three months after Hargrove filed his complaint. Additionally, this first grievance, dated November 19, 2004, was submitted five months after the last PPD test was administered to him in June 2004. NHCC Defs.' 56.1 Statement ¶¶ 5,6. This five-month period far exceeds the five-day window provided by NCCF's IGP. Since Hargrove failed to comply with the IGP's deadlines, he did not properly exhaust the available administrative remedies. [Ruggiero, 467 F.3d at 176](#) (“ ‘untimely or otherwise procedurally defective attempts to secure administrative remedies do not satisfy the PLRA's exhaustion requirement.’ ”) (quoting [Woodford, 126 S.Ct. at 2382](#)).

[FN11](#). Based on an examination of the documents themselves, as well as the uncontradicted testimony of the notaries performing services for prisoners at NCCF, see generally Klein Aff.; McDevitt Aff., and of the investigator in the Inmate Grievance Unit, see generally Williams Aff., it appears that many of the documents submitted by Hargrove are forgeries. However, in order to view the facts in the light most favorable to Hargrove, and so as to avoid making findings of fact in a summary judgment motion, for the purposes of the exhaustion analysis, all of the documents will be considered to be authentic. However, for purposes of the sanctions analysis, the documents will be explored and the consequences of Hargrove's misrepresentations will be addressed.

Furthermore, even if the falsified grievance forms Hargrove submitted in support of his claim are considered authentic, they are still untimely. The diagnostic TB tests (whether x-ray or PPD tests) were given to Hargrove on March 15, 2002, May 24, 2003 and in June of 2004, but the grievance forms Hargrove submitted complaining of unwanted PPD tests are dated April 19, 2002, April 28, 2002, April 20, 2003, April 28, 2003 and November 19,

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2004. None of these grievances were filed “within five days of the of the date of the act or occurrence giving rise to the grievance.” Williams Aff. at 3. There is no evidence in the record suggesting that NCCF's IGP allows for a tolling of the five-day time limit in which to file a grievance.^{FN12}

(4)

No Grounds to Excuse Plaintiff's Failure to Exhaust

^{FN12}. Even if the submitted grievances had been filed within the proscribed time period, they only show that Hargrove's grievances reached an Inmate Grievance Coordinator, the first formal step of NCCF's three-step administrative grievance process; Hargrove never appealed to the Chief Administrative Officer. By failing to take the next available step in NCCF's IGP, Hargrove failed to satisfy the mandatory exhaustion requirement. See, e.g., Williams, 418 F.Supp.2d at 101, 102 (dismissing *pro se* complaint where plaintiff could only show he exhausted two of the four-step process mandated by prison's administrative process).

While the letters to Reilly and sick call requests show that Hargrove attempted to bring his complaints about the PPD testing to the attention of the prison staff, see, e.g., Aff. in Opp., Exs. A-D, NCCF's IGP requires use of formal grievance forms. Thus, writing complaint letters and submitting sick call requests did not properly exhaust NCCF's available administrative remedies. See, e.g., Hernandez v. Coffey, No. 99-CV-11615, 2006 WL 2109465, at *4 (S.D.N.Y. July 26, 2006) (holding letters did not satisfy plaintiff's exhaustion obligation); Williams, 418 F.Supp.2d at 101 (holding that because plaintiff's efforts to convey his medical condition through letters and conversations with the warden and medical staff did “not include the required steps of the PLRA's administrative remedy process,” plaintiff failed to exhaust); Mills v. Garvin, No. 99-CV-6032, 2001 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 3333, at *8 (S.D.N.Y. Mar. 2, 2001) (“letter writing is not the equivalent of an exhaustion of administrative remedies under the PLRA”).

As Hargrove failed to properly exhaust his administrative remedies, this action is precluded by 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a) unless Hargrove can establish excuse for his failure to exhaust.

*8 Exhaustion is an affirmative defense that defendants have the duty to raise. Jones, 2007 WL 135890, at *8-11; Sloane, 2006 WL 3096031, at *4; Williams, 418 F.Supp.2d at 101. Once argued by the defendants, a plaintiff has an opportunity to show why the exhaustion requirement should be excused or why his failure to exhaust is justified. See Ruggiero, 467 F.3d at 175; Collins v. Goord, 438 F.Supp.2d 399, 411 (S.D.N.Y.2006) (“[T]he Second Circuit has cautioned that ‘while the PLRA's exhaustion requirement is ‘mandatory,’ certain caveats apply.’”) (internal citations omitted). Thus, before concluding that a prisoner failed to exhaust available administrative remedies as required by Section 1997e(a) of the PLRA, the following three factors must be considered: (1) whether administrative remedies were actually available to the prisoner; (2) whether defendants have either waived the defense of failure to exhaust or acted in such a way as to estop them from raising the defense; and (3) whether special circumstances, such as a reasonable misunderstanding of the grievance procedures, exist justifying the prisoner's failure to comply with the exhaustion requirement. Ruggiero, 467 F.3d at 175 (citing Hemphill v. New York, 380 F.3d 680, 686 (2d Cir.2004)).^{FN13}

^{FN13}. Courts in the Second Circuit have questioned what effect, if any, the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Woodford* requiring “proper exhaustion” may have on the three-step *Hemphill* inquiry. The Second Circuit has yet to address this issue. See Ruggiero, 467 F.3d at 175-76 (declining to “determine what effect *Woodford* has on our case law in this area ... because [plaintiff] could not have prevailed even under our pre-*Woodford* case law). To date, district courts have acknowledged the tension, but resolved to apply *Hemphill* to exhaustion claims until instructed otherwise by the Second Circuit. See, e.g., Larkins v. Selsky, 04-CV-5900, 2006 WL 3548959, at *9, n. 4 (S.D.N.Y. Dec. 6,

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[2006](#)) (applying the current law of the Second Circuit to exhaustion claims); [Sloane, 2006 WL 3096031, at *5](#) (“Until such time as the Court of Appeals considers the impact of *Woodford*, if any, on its prior rulings, this Court must follow the law of the Second Circuit. The Court will therefore apply the current law of this circuit to the exhaustion claims.”); [Collins v. Goord, 438 F.Supp.2d at 411 n. 13](#) (acknowledging that *Woodford* and *Hemphill* may be in tension, but deciding exhaustion claims under *Hemphill* inquiry); [Hernandez v. Coffey, No. 99-CV11615, 2006 WL 2109465, at *3 \(S.D.N.Y. July 26, 2006\)](#) (same). Here, Hargrove does not prevail under *Hemphill*; therefore, there is no occasion to address the potential effect *Woodford* may have had in his case.

a. Whether administrative remedies were “available” to Hargrove

The first step in the *Hemphill* inquiry requires a court to determine whether administrative remedies were available to the prisoner. [Hemphill, 380 F.3d at 686](#). The test for assessing availability is an “objective one: that is, would a similarly situated individual of ordinary firmness have deemed them available.” [Id. at 688](#) (internal quotation marks omitted). In making this determination, “courts should be careful to look at the applicable set of grievance procedures.” [Abney v. McGinnis, 380 F.3d 663, 668 \(2d Cir.2004\)](#). Exhaustion may be considered unavailable in situations where plaintiff is unaware of the grievance procedures or did not understand it, [Ruggiero, 467 F.3d at 179](#), or where defendants' behavior prevents plaintiff from seeking administrative remedies,^{FN14} [Hemphill v. State of New York, 380 F.3d 680, 686 \(2d Cir.2004\)](#).

^{FN14}. Case law does not clearly distinguish between situations in which defendants' behavior renders administrative remedies “unavailable” to the plaintiff and cases in which defendants are estopped from asserting non-exhaustion as an affirmative defense because of their behavior. As such, there will be some overlap in the analyses.

Here, Hargrove has not claimed that NCCF's administrative grievance procedure was unavailable to him. In fact, Hargrove demonstrated his access to and knowledge of NCCF's IGP by filing proper grievances on November 19, 2004 and on May 10, 2005. Hargrove did not dispute any part of Investigator Williams's affidavit detailing the IGP and its availability to inmates since 2001. Specifically, Hargrove did not dispute, upon entering the facility, that he received a copy of the inmate handbook outlining the IGP. He has not claimed that he is unfamiliar with or unaware of NCCF's IGP. Hargrove has not alleged that prison officials failed to advance his grievances^{FN15} or that they threatened him or took any other action which effectively rendered the administrative process unavailable.

^{FN15}. Although not specifically alleged, interpreting the evidence to “raise the strongest argument,” Hargrove may be arguing that NCCF's IGP was not available to him because the Grievance Coordinator failed to respond to his grievances. In the single grievance regarding PPD tests that defendants concede is authentic, Hargrove writes, “[n]ow for the third time your office refused to answer my grievances so please look into this matter because the T.B. shot is [sic] effecting my health.” 11/19/04 Grievance. This language implies that Hargrove filed grievances in the past and received no response from the Inmate Grievance Coordinator. Furthermore, Hargrove wrote on one of the submitted copies of the November 19, 2004 grievance that “[t]his is the only accepte[sic] that Plaintiff got back from all grievances and letters that the Plaintiff sent to Sheriff Riley and his medical staffs about his staff making [sic] take T.B. test for 3 year[s].” County Defs.' Not. of Motion, Ex. A, 11/19/2004 grievance.

First, it must be reiterated that filing of the initial grievances was untimely. However, even assuming *arguendo* that the original grievances had been timely filed, district courts in the Second Circuit have held that the “lack of a response from the [Inmate Grievance Review Committee] does not excuse an inmate's obligation to exhaust his

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remedies through available appeals.” [Hernandez v. Coffey](#), 2006 WL 2109465, at *3-5. See also [Hemphill](#), 380 F.3d at 686 (“Threats or other intimidation by prison officials may well deter a prisoner of ‘ordinary firmness’ from filing an internal grievance, but not from appealing directly to individuals in positions of greater authority within the prison system”); [Acosta v. Corr. Officer Dawkins](#), No. 04-CV-6678, 2005 WL 1668627, at *3 (S.D.N.Y. July 14, 2005) (inmate required to appeal lack of response to exhaust administrative remedies); [Mendoza v. Goord](#), No. 00-CV-0146, 2002 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 22573, at *6 (S.D.N.Y. Nov. 21, 2002) (“If, as a result of a negligent error by prison officials-or even their deliberate attempt to sabotage a prisoner’s grievance-the prisoner [does not receive a response] on his complaint, he is not thereby forestalled from appealing”). Hargrove did not assert or offer evidence suggesting that he appealed the unresponsiveness or that those appeals were not advanced.

*9 Additionally, Hargrove’s transfer from NCCF to Sing Sing Correctional Facility (“Sing Sing”) in July 2005 did not excuse his previous failure to properly exhaust. See, e.g., [Sims v. Blot](#), No. 00-CV-2524, 2003 WL 21738766, at *4 (S.D.N.Y. July 25, 2003) (determining that failure to exhaust administrative remedies is not excused by transfer to another facility); [Santiago v. Meinsen](#), 89 F.Supp.2d 435, 440-41 (S.D.N.Y.2000) (determining that plaintiff should not be “rewarded” for failing to participate in grievance procedure before being transferred). Hargrove had ample opportunity to properly file his grievances and to appeal their results as required by NCCF’s procedures while he was imprisoned at NCCF. The last PPD test Hargrove complains of was given in 2004; therefore, Hargrove had until June or July of 2004 to timely file his grievance in accordance with NCCF’s IGP. Hargrove was not transferred to Sing Sing until July 2005. County Defs.’ Mem. of Law at 2. Thus, Hargrove’s transfer cannot excuse his previous failure to properly exhaust.

b. Estoppel

The second step of the inquiry asks whether defendants are estopped from raising exhaustion as a defense. Specifically, “whether the defendants may have forfeited the affirmative defense of non-exhaustion by failing to raise or preserve it, or whether the defendants’ own actions inhibiting the inmate’s exhaustion of remedies may estop one or more of the defendants from raising the plaintiff’s failure to exhaust as a defense.” [Hemphill](#), 380 F.3d at 686 (internal citations omitted).

Here, Hargrove has not made any statements that would permit a finding that defendants should be estopped from raising the affirmative defense of exhaustion or that defendants waived the right to raise the defense. Defendants first raised the PLRA’s exhaustion requirement as an affirmative defense in their respective answers. See County Defs.’ Am. Answer at 3; NHCC Defs.’ Answer at 1. County Defendants raised it again in their motion for summary judgment. See County Defs.’ Mem of Law at 15-23. Thus, defendants are not estopped from raising the affirmative defense now. See, e.g., [Sloane](#), 2006 WL 3096031, at *8 (exhaustion defense not waived where defendants first raised it in their motion to dismiss).

Additionally, defendants have not threatened Hargrove or engaged in other conduct preventing him from exhausting the available administrative remedies. Cf. [Ziemba v. Wezner](#), 366 F.3d 161, 162 (2d Cir.2004) (holding defendants were estopped from asserting non-exhaustion because of prison officials’ beatings, threats and other conduct inhibiting the inmate from filing proper grievances); [Feliciano v. Goord](#), No. 97-CV-263, 1998 WL 436358, at *2 (S.D.N.Y. July 27, 1998) (holding defendants were estopped from asserting non-exhaustion where prison officials refused to provide inmate with grievance forms, assured him that the incidents would be investigated by staff as a prerequisite to filing a grievance, and provided prisoner with no information about results of investigation). Hargrove has not argued otherwise. See [Ruggiero](#), 467 F.3d at 178 (holding defendants were not estopped from asserting a failure to exhaust defense where plaintiff pointed to no affirmative act by prison officials that would have prevented him from pursuing administrative remedies); [Sloane](#), 2006 WL 3096031, at *8 (finding no estoppel where plaintiff did not argue that defendants prevented him from pursuing the available administrative remedies); [Hernandez](#), 2006 WL 2109465,

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at *4 (finding no estoppel where plaintiff did not argue that any threats or intimidation prevented him from pursuing his appeals). Thus, for the same reasons that administrative remedies were not deemed unavailable to Hargrove, defendants are not estopped from raising a failure to exhaust defense.

c. Special circumstances

*10 Even where administrative remedies are available and the defendants are not estopped from arguing exhaustion, the court must “consider whether ‘special circumstances’ have been plausibly alleged that justify ‘the prisoner’s failure to comply with administrative procedural requirements.’” *Hemphill*, 380 F.3d at 688 (quoting *Giano*, 380 F.3d at 676). For example, plaintiff’s reasonable interpretation of regulations differing from prison official’s interpretation has been held to constitute a “special circumstance.” *Giano*, 380 F.3d at 676-77. No special circumstances have been alleged that would excuse Hargrove from availing himself of administrative remedies. See *Sloane*, 2006 WL 3096031, at *8; *Freeman v. Goord*, No. 02-CV-9033, 2004 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 23873, at *9-10 (S.D.N.Y.2004) (granting motion to dismiss where “there is no evidence in the record ••• of any ‘special circumstances’ in this action.”)

(5)

Hargrove's Failure to Exhaust, in Addition to his Fraud on the Court, Warrants Dismissal with Prejudice

Hargrove has not sufficiently rebutted the defendants’ assertion of failure to exhaust, and a liberal reading of his submissions does not reveal any grounds to excuse that failure.

Because Hargrove filed a complaint in federal court before filing a grievance, permitting his unexhausted and unexcused claim to proceed would undercut one of the goals of the exhaustion doctrine by allowing NCCF to be haled into federal court without the “opportunity to correct

its own mistakes with respect to the programs it administers.” *Woodford*, 126 S.Ct. at 2385. See also *Ruggiero*, 467 F.3d at 178 (citing *Porter*, 534 U.S. at 525). Thus, his complaint must be dismissed.

In general, dismissal without prejudice is appropriate where plaintiff has failed to exhaust but the time permitted for pursuing administrative remedies has not expired. *Berry v. Kerik*, 366 F.3d 85, 87 (2d Cir.2004). Dismissal with prejudice is appropriate where “administrative remedies have become unavailable after the prisoner had ample opportunity to use them and no special circumstances justified failure to exhaust.” *Berry*, 366 F.3d at 88. Here, Hargrove’s administrative remedies were available to him during his entire period of confinement at NCCF. He remained incarcerated in NCCF throughout the time period in which he alleges the PPD tests were given. He could have exhausted remedies for his grievances at any time. Therefore, Hargrove had ample opportunity to seek administrative remedies but failed to do so. Because there is no evidence in the record that administrative remedies are still available to Hargrove, as the five-day time period had run, and because Hargrove has alleged no special circumstances justifying his failure to exhaust, his complaint is accordingly dismissed with prejudice. *Berry*, 366 F.3d at 88 (upholding dismissal with prejudice where plaintiff had no justification for his failure to pursue administrative remedies while they were available.)

*11 Additionally, defendants’ have moved for sanctions based on Hargrove’s alleged submission of falsified evidence. If a party commits a fraud on the court, the court has the inherent power to do whatever is reasonably necessary to deter abuse of the judicial process. *Shangold v. The Walt Disney Co.*, No. 03-CV-9522, 2006 WL 71672, at *4 (S.D.N.Y. January 12, 2006) (citing *Chambers v. NASCO, Inc.*, 501 U.S. 32, 44 (1991)). Fraud upon the court has been defined as “fraud which seriously affects the integrity of the normal process of adjudication.” *Gleason v. Jandrucko*, 860 F.2d 556, 559 (2d Cir.1988); *McMunn v. Mem’l Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center*, 191 F.Supp.2d 440, 445 (S.D.N.Y.2002). In order for a court to grant sanctions based upon fraud, it must be established by clear and convincing evidence that a party has “sentiently set in motion some unconscionable scheme calculated to interfere with the judicial system’s ability impartially to adjudicate a matter by ... unfairly hampering

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the presentation of the opposing party's claim or defense.”
[McMunn](#), 191 F.Supp.2d at 455 (quoting [Aoude v. Mobil Oil Corp.](#), 892 F.2d 1115, 1119 (1st Cir.1989)).

After carefully reviewing the allegedly fraudulent documents, it must be concluded that Hargrove consciously falsified these documents. *See, e.g.*, [Shangold](#), 2006 WL 71672, at *1, *3 (finding clear and convincing evidence of fraud where plaintiffs fabricated a timeline and plot outlines to advance their claims); [McMunn](#), 191 F.Supp.2d at 446 (finding clear and convincing evidence of fraud where plaintiff edited audio tapes and represented that they were unedited during discovery). The notaries performing services for prisoners at NCCF testify that they never notarized many of the documents supplied by Hargrove. *See* Klein Aff.; McDevitt Aff. Furthermore, a visual examination of the documents themselves makes it clear that many of the documents submitted by Hargrove are forgeries.

In considering what sanction to impose, courts consider the following five factors: (i) whether the misconduct was the product of intentional bad faith; (ii) whether and to what extent the misconduct prejudiced the plaintiffs; (iii) whether there was a pattern of misbehavior rather than an isolated instance; (iv) whether and when the misconduct was corrected; and (v) whether further misconduct is likely to occur in the future. [Scholastic, Inc. v. Stouffer](#), 221 F.Supp.2d 425, 444 (S.D.N.Y.2002) (citing [McMunn](#), 191 F.Supp.2d at 461).

Here, Hargrove's deception was not an isolated instance; he fabricated the dates on many grievance forms, in addition to improperly duplicating notary stamps on complaint letters to make them look authentic. Klein Aff. at 2; McDevitt Aff. at 2; County Defs.' 56.1 Statement ¶¶ C3, D3. He submitted these forgeries to defendants during discovery and again as exhibits to his Affidavit in Opposition to Defendant's Motion for Summary Judgment. A severe sanction is warranted as Hargrove's forgeries were intentional, he never corrected them once their authenticity was challenged and he continues to insist on their veracity. Aff. in Opp. at 1-4. Given that there is clear and convincing evidence that Hargrove has continuously and consciously perpetrated a fraud on the court through his submission of fraudulent documents and sworn

affirmations of those documents' authenticity, dismissal with prejudice is especially appropriate. *See, e.g.*, [Shangold](#), 2006 WL 71672, at *5 (dismissing with prejudice where plaintiffs fabricated evidence to advance their claims); [Scholastic](#), 221 F.Supp.2d at 439-444 (dismissing with prejudice where plaintiff produced seven pieces of falsified evidence); [McMunn](#), 191 F.Supp.2d at 445 (dismissing with prejudice where plaintiff “lie[d] to the court and his adversary intentionally, repeatedly, and about issues that are central to the truth-finding process”).

Conclusion

*12 Because Hargrove did not satisfy the exhaustion requirement under the PLRA, defendants' motions for summary judgment are granted. Further, considering the fraud Hargrove perpetrated on the court, the claims are dismissed against all defendants with prejudice. The Clerk of the Court is directed to close the case.

SO ORDERED:

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C

Only the Westlaw citation is currently available.

United States District Court,
N.D. New York.
James PETTUS, Plaintiff,
v.

Jospeh McCOY, Superintendent, Deputy Ryan,
Defendants.
No. 9:04-CV-0471.

Sept. 13, 2006.

James Pettus, Comstock, NY, pro se.

Charles J. Quackenbush, New York State Attorney
General, The Capitol Albany, NY, for Defendants.

pursuant to N.D.N.Y.L.R. 7.1(a)(3). These facts are deemed admitted because they are supported by the record evidence and Plaintiff failed to submit an opposing statement of material facts as required by Rule 7.1(a)(3). Plaintiff was specifically advised by Defendants of his obligation to file an opposing statement of material facts and to otherwise properly respond to the motion for summary judgment.

Plaintiff is an inmate in the custody of the New York State Department of Correctional Services. Plaintiff signed the instant Complaint on April 7, 2004. On his Complaint form, Plaintiff indicated that there is a grievance procedure available to him and that he availed himself of the grievance procedure by filing a complaint with the IGRC ^{FN2}, followed by an appeal to the superintendent of the facility, and then to the Central Office Review Committee in Albany. The Complaint indicates that Plaintiff is “waiting for response from Albany.” The Complaint was filed on April 27, 2004.

DECISION and ORDER

^{FN2}. Inmate Grievance Review Committee.

THOMAS J. McAVOY, Senior District Judge.

*1 Plaintiff commenced the instant action asserting various violations of his constitutional rights arising out of his placement at the Southport Correctional Facility. In his Complaint, Plaintiff alleges that he was improperly sent to the Special Housing Unit (“SHU”) at a maximum security facility and that being in SHU has put his life in jeopardy. Currently before the Court is Defendants' motion for summary judgment pursuant to Fed.R.Civ.P. 56 seeking dismissal of the Complaint in its entirety for failure to exhaust administrative remedies.

On April 12, 2004, prior to the filing of the instant Complaint, Plaintiff filed a grievance relating to the issues presented in this case. On April 19, 2004, the IGRC recommended that Plaintiff's grievance be denied. Plaintiff then appealed that decision to the facility Superintendent. In the meantime, on April 27, Plaintiff commenced the instant litigation. On May 3, 2004, after Plaintiff filed the Complaint in this case, the Superintendent denied Plaintiff's grievance. On May 5, 2004, Plaintiff appealed the decision to the Central Office Review Committee in Albany. On June 23, 2004, the Central Office Review Committee denied Plaintiff's appeal. Plaintiff did not file any other grievances in connection with the matters raised in this lawsuit.

I. FACTS^{FN1}

Defendants now move to dismiss on the ground that Plaintiff commenced the instant action before fully exhausting his available administrative remedies.

^{FN1}. The following facts are taken from Defendants' statement of material facts submitted

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II. DISCUSSION

The sole issue presented is whether Plaintiff was required to complete the administrative process before commencing this litigation. This issue has already been addressed by the Second Circuit in [Neal v. Goord, 267 F.3d 116 \(2d Cir.2001\)](#). The issue in that case was “whether plaintiff’s complaint should have been dismissed despite his having exhausted at least some claims during the pendency of his lawsuit.” [Id. at 121](#). The Second Circuit held that “exhausting administrative remedies after a complaint is filed will not save a case from dismissal.” *Id.*

In this case, Defendants have established from a legally sufficient source that an administrative remedy is available and applicable. [Mojias v. Johnson, 351 F.3d 606, 610 \(2d Cir.2003\)](#); see also 7. N.Y.C.R.R. § 701.1, *et seq.* Plaintiff’s Complaint concerns his placement in SHU at a maximum security facility. These are matters that fall within the grievance procedure available to NYSDOCS inmates and are required to be exhausted under the Prison Litigation Reform Act, [42 U.S.C. § 1997e](#). Plaintiff has failed to demonstrate any applicable exception to the exhaustion requirement. Because Plaintiff commenced the instant litigation prior to fully completing the administrative review process, the instant Complaint must be dismissed without prejudice. [Neal, 267 F.3d 116](#).

III. CONCLUSION

***2** For the foregoing reasons, Defendants’ motion for summary judgment is GRANTED and the Complaint is DISMISSED WITHOUT PREJUDICE. The Clerk of the Court shall close the file in this matter.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

N.D.N.Y.,2006.
Pettus v. McCoy
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Only the Westlaw citation is currently available.

United States District Court,

N.D. New York.

Troy GARRETT, Plaintiff,

v.

Edward REYNOLDS, Superintendent, Mohawk Corr. Facility; James A. Mance, Deputy Superintendent of Programs; John O'Reilly, [FN1](#) Deputy Superintendent; J. Burge, First Deputy; M. Maher, DSS; R. Centore, Correctional Officer, Defendants.

[FN1](#). In this case, the defendants maintain and the docket confirms that defendant John O'Reilly has never been served. Service must be made upon a defendant within 120 days of filing the complaint or any claims against that defendant will be dismissed. See [Fed.R.Civ.P. 4\(m\)](#). The original complaint, which named O'Reilly, was filed on November 26, 1999, and the amended complaint was filed on July 13, 2001. However, O'Reilly was never served. Since this defendant has never been served, this court lacks jurisdiction over him, and this court recommends the dismissal of this defendant.

No. Civ.9:99CV2065NAMGLS.

Oct. 7, 2003.

Troy Garrett, Peekskill, NY, Plaintiff, pro se.

Hon. [Eliot Spitzer](#), Attorney General State of New York, Syracuse, NY, for the Defendants.

Maria Moran, Asst. Attorney General, of counsel.

REPORT-RECOMMENDATION

[SHARPE](#), Magistrate J.

I. Introduction [FN2](#)

[FN2](#). This matter was referred to the undersigned for a Report-Recommendation by the Hon.

Norman A. Mordue, United States District Judge, pursuant to [28 U.S.C. § 636\(b\)\(1\)\(B\)](#) and Local Rule 72.3(c).

*1 Plaintiff, *pro se* Troy Garrett filed an action under [42 U.S.C. § 1983](#) claiming that the defendants violated his civil rights when they retaliated against him for his activities as an IGRC representative by subjecting him to verbal harassment, physical abuse and subsequently, a transfer. Garrett also claims that the supervisory defendants failed to properly investigate his complaints and failed to train/supervise their employees. This court recommends denying the motion for summary judgment in part and granting it in part.

II. Procedural History

On July 13, 2001, Garrett filed an amended complaint against the defendants claiming that they violated his civil rights under the First, Sixth Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments. [FN3](#) On September 28, 2001, the defendants filed a motion for summary judgment. On January 18, 2002, this court issued an order informing Garrett of his obligation to file a response and extended his time to respond for thirty days. On April 24, 2002, this court granted an additional sixty days to respond to the defendants' motion. Despite having been given multiple opportunities to respond, Garrett has failed to file a response.

[FN3](#). Although Garrett claims to be raising violations under the Sixth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments, the only viable claim based on this court's interpretation of the complaint is under the First Amendment for retaliation.

III. Facts [FN4](#)

[FN4](#). The facts are taken from the defendants' statement of undisputed material facts since Garrett failed to file a response.

On June 17, 1999, Garrett filed a grievance against

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Officer Kelley for verbal harassment.^{FN5} This grievance was denied by the Central Office Review Committee (CORC) on July 21, 1999. On March 19, 2000, Garrett filed a grievance claiming that defendant Burge used intimidation tactics. Defendant Reynolds investigated the grievance and it was denied based on a finding that no harassment occurred. Garrett appealed to the CORC and they denied the grievance on April 5, 2000. On April 10, 2000, defendant Centore wrote a misbehavior report against Garrett for creating a disturbance and employee harassment. On April 12, 2000, Lieutenant Manell presided over Garrett's Tier 2 disciplinary hearing and he was found guilty of both charges. He was given a 21 day recreation penalty, and loss of packages and commissary. However, his recreation penalty was suspended and deferred. Garrett appealed the determination and it was affirmed on April 19, 2000.

^{FN5}. Not a party in this suit.

On April 17, 2000, Garrett filed a grievance against Centore for harassment. Burge denied his grievance on May 4, 2000, and subsequently, the CORC denied it. On May 12, 2000, Garrett sent a letter to Burge concerning further harassment by Centore. On May 16, 2000, Garrett filed another grievance against Centore for harassment. His grievance was denied on May 26, 2000. After Garrett appealed, his grievance was again denied by the CORC. On June 22, 2000, the Superintendent's Office received a letter from Garrett alleging that Centore threw a piece of paper with a picture of a plunger and the words "always gets the job done" into his cell. He wrote a grievance against Centore for harassment due to the paper that he threw into his cell. Burge forwarded the grievance to the CORC on August 10, 2000. The CORC accepted the grievance on August 30, 2000, in order to investigate.

*2 On June 23, 2000, the Inspector General's Office interviewed Garrett at the Mohawk Correctional Facility regarding his complaints of Centore. That same day, Captain Naughton filed an administrative segregation recommendation. On June 29, 2000, an administrative segregation hearing was held. On July 14, 2000, Garrett was transferred^{FN6} to the Mid-State Correctional Facility.

^{FN6}. The defendants suggest that Garrett has

failed to exhaust his administrative remedies concerning his transfer. They claim that he agreed to the transfer and participated in the administrative hearing which resulted in his transfer. The issue of transfer will not be addressed in this Report-Recommendation because the court has insufficient information to determine whether he exhausted his remedies.

Finally, Garrett filed a claim alleging that his property was lost or damaged on October 8, 1999. However, he was paid \$75.00 for this claim and he signed a release on December 13, 1999.

IV. Discussion

A. Legal Standard

Summary judgment shall be granted "if the pleadings, depositions, answers to interrogatories, and admissions on file, together with the affidavits ... show that there is no genuine issue as to any material fact and that the moving party is entitled to a judgment as a matter of law." Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc., 477 U.S. 242, 247 (1986); accord F.D.I.C. v. Giammettei, 34 F.3d 51, 54 (2d Cir.1994). The moving party has the burden of demonstrating that there is no genuine issue of material fact. Celotex Corp. v. Catrett, 477 U.S. 317, 323 (1986); Thomas v. Roach, 165 F.3d 137, 142 (2d Cir.1999). "When a motion for summary judgment is made and supported ... an adverse party may not rest upon the mere allegations or denials of the ... pleading, but the adverse party's response, by affidavits or as otherwise provided in [Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 56(e)], must set forth specific facts showing that there is a genuine issue for trial." St. Pierre v. Dyer, 208 F.3d 394, 404 (2d Cir.2000). "[T]he mere existence of some alleged factual dispute between the parties will not defeat an otherwise properly supported motion for summary judgment[.]" Rexford Holdings, Inc. v. Biderman, 21 F.3d 522, 525 (2d Cir.1994)(alternation in original) (citation omitted). However, it is well settled that on a motion for summary judgment, the court must construe the evidence in the light most favorable to the non-moving party. Tenenbaum v. Williams, 193 F.3d 581, 593 (2d Cir.1999).

Furthermore, in a *pro se* case, the court must view the submissions by a more lenient standard than that accorded

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to “formal pleadings drafted by lawyers.” [Haines v. Kerner](#), 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972); see [Estelle v. Gamble](#), 429 U.S. 97, 106 (1976); [Burgos v. Hopkins](#), 14 F.3d 787, 790 (2d Cir.1994)(a court is to read a *pro se* party's “supporting papers liberally, and ... interpret them to raise the strongest arguments that they suggest”). Indeed, the Second Circuit has stated that “[i]mplicit in the right to self-representation is an obligation on the part of the court to make reasonable allowances to protect *pro se* litigants from inadvertent forfeiture of important rights because of their lack of legal training.” [Traguth v. Zuck](#), 710 F.2d 90, 95 (2d Cir.1983). Any ambiguities and inferences drawn from the facts must be viewed in the light most favorable to the non-moving party. [Thompson v. Gjivoje](#), 896 F.2d 716, 720 (2d Cir.1990); see [LaFond v. General Physics Serv. Corp.](#), 50 F.3d 165, 171 (2d Cir.1995).

*3 This liberal standard, however, does not excuse a *pro se* litigant from following the procedural formalities of summary judgment. [Showers v. Eastmond](#), 00 CIV. 3725, 2001 WL 527484, at *2 (S.D.N.Y. May 16, 2001). More specifically, Local Rule 7.1(a)(3) of this court specifically provides that “any facts set forth in the [moving party's] Statement of Material Facts shall be deemed admitted unless specifically controverted by the opposing party.” Local Rule 7.1(a)(3) further requires that the “non-movant shall file a Statement of Material Fact which mirrors the movant's statement in matching numbered paragraphs and which set forth a specific reference to the record where the material fact is alleged to arise.” The courts of the Northern District have adhered to a strict application of Local Rule 7.1(a)(3)'s requirement on summary judgment motions. [Giguere v. Racicot](#), 00-CV-1178, 2002 WL 368534, at *2 (N.D.N.Y. March 1, 2002)(interalia citing [Bundy Am. Corp. v. K-Z Rental Leasing, Inc.](#), 00-CV-260, 2001 WL 237218, at *1 (N.D.N.Y. March 9, 2001)).

Furthermore, this Circuit adheres to the view that nothing in [Rule 56](#) imposes an obligation on the court to conduct a search and independent review of the record to find proof of a factual dispute. [Amnesty America v. Town of West Hartford](#), 288 F.3d 467, 470 (2d Cir.2002). As long as the local rules impose a requirement that parties provide specific record citations in support of their statement of material facts, the court may grant summary judgment on that basis. [Id.](#) at 470-71.

In this case, Garrett did not file a response to the motion for summary judgment. Consequently, this court will accept the properly supported facts contained in the defendants' 7.1 Statement (*Dkt. No. 49*) as true for purposes of this motion.^{FN7} With this standard in mind, the court now turns to the sufficiency of Garrett's claims.

^{FN7}. The court notes that this does not apply to the various conclusions of law contained in the defendants' 7.1 Statement.

B. Eleventh Amendment

In Garrett's complaint, he raises claims against the defendants in their official and individual capacity. The Eleventh Amendment provides that: “[t]he judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by Citizens of another State, or by Citizens or Subjects of any Foreign State.” [U.S. Const. Amend. XI](#). Although the Amendment does not specifically prohibit suits against a state by its own citizens, the Supreme Court has consistently applied that immunity to such cases. See [Burnette v. Carothers](#), 192 F.3d 52, 57 (2d Cir.1999)(citing [Edelman v. Jordan](#), 415 U.S. 651, 662-63 (1974)). Moreover, it is well established that Eleventh Amendment immunity applies not only when a state is a named defendant, but when liability must be paid from state coffers. See [New York City Health & Hosp. Corp. v. Perales](#), 50 F.3d 129, 134 (2d Cir.1995)(citing [Edelman](#), 415 U.S. at 665); [Dawkins v. State of New York](#), 93-CV-1298, 1996 WL 156764, at *2 (N.D.N.Y. Mar. 28, 1996).

*4 In this case, Garrett raises claims against the defendants in their official and individual capacities. Since the Eleventh Amendment bars official capacity claims against these state officers, this court recommends dismissal of Garrett's claims against the defendants in their official capacity.

C. Retaliation

In this case, Garrett claims that during the course of his appointment as an IGRC representative, he has been subjected to repeated acts of harassment, both verbal and

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physical, threatened with physical assaults, placed into disciplinary confinement in the SHU, and transferred.^{FN8} The Second Circuit has held that retaliation against a prisoner for pursuing a grievance is actionable under § 1983. *Graham v. Henderson*, 89 F.3d 75, 80 (2d Cir.1996). Moreover, the Second Circuit has recognized both the near inevitability of decisions and actions by prison officials to which prisoners will take exception and the ease with which claims of retaliation may be fabricated. Thus, prisoners' claims of retaliation are examined with skepticism and particular care. See *Flaherty v. Coughlin*, 713 F.2d 10 (2d Cir.1983).

^{FN8}. This case turns on the interpretation of the complaint. Garrett's complaint is not a model of clarity and as noted, he has failed to file a response to the motion for summary judgment. Nonetheless, a careful reading of Garrett's opening paragraph under the title "Facts" compels this court to interpret this complaint as one claiming retaliation for his activities and status as an IGRC representative.

In order for a plaintiff to prevail on a First Amendment retaliation claim, a plaintiff must advance non-conclusory allegations establishing: (1) that the speech or conduct at issue was protected; (2) that the defendant took adverse action against the plaintiff; and, (3) that there was a causal connection between the protected speech and the adverse action. See *Dawes v. Walker*,^{FN9} 239 F.3d 489, 492 (2d Cir.2001) (citation omitted) *overruled on other grounds*, *Swierkiewicz v. Sorema N.A.*, 534 U.S. 506 (2002). If Garrett makes these showings, DOCS may evade liability if it demonstrates that it would have disciplined or transferred him "even in the absence of the protected conduct." *Bennett v. Goord*, 343 F.3d 133, 137 (2d Cir.2003) (citations omitted).

^{FN9}. Dawes' complaint was dismissed pursuant to *Fed.R.Civ.P. 12(b)(6)*.

An inmate has a constitutional right to be protected from retaliation based upon his activities as an IGRC representative. *Alnutt v. Cleary*, 913 F.Supp. 160, 170 (W.D.N.Y.1996). However, a claim brought under "42 U.S.C. § 1983 is not designed to rectify harassment or verbal abuse." *Gill v. Hoadley*, 261 F.Supp 2d 113, 129

(N.D.N.Y.2003)(citing *Alnutt*, 913 F.Supp at 165-66)). Ordinarily, a claim for verbal harassment is not actionable under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. *Aziz Zarif Shabazz v. Picco*, 994 F.Supp. 460, 474 (S.D.N.Y.1998). Moreover, "verbal harassment or profanity alone, unaccompanied by an injury no matter how inappropriate, unprofessional, or reprehensible it might seem, does not constitute the violation of any federally protected right and therefore is not actionable under 42 U.S.C. § 1983." *Aziz Zarif Shabazz*, 994 F.Supp. at 474.

In this case, Garrett claims that defendant Centore harassed him for his activities as an IGRC representative. Garrett also claims that he was removed as an IGRC representative when he was transferred. In addition, Garrett claims that defendants Reynolds, Mance, Burger and Maher failed to properly investigate his allegations against Centore. Garrett claims that these defendants failed to properly investigate his claims in retaliation for his activities as an IGRC representative.

*5 More specifically, Garrett claims that Reynolds and Mance recalled IGRC passes for one day in order to interfere with an investigation inquiry into a correctional officer's conduct involving inmates who were left in the yard during inclement weather. Finally, Garrett claims that his property was destroyed while he was in the SHU.^{FN10} Garrett filed grievances against Centore in April, May, and June of 2000. One of his complaints involved Centore throwing a folded piece of paper into his cell which had a picture of a plunger with the words "always gets the job done" on it. On June 23, 2000, he was placed in administrative segregation in the SHU. Three weeks later he was transferred.^{FN11}

^{FN10}. However, the defendants provide the court with documents which show that he was paid \$75.00 in settlement of this claim.

^{FN11}. The defendants maintain that Garrett failed to exhaust this claim. At this juncture, it is unclear whether or not he exhausted this claim. As such, this court cannot, as a matter of law, recommend dismissal because the court has insufficient information to determine this issue.

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Viewing the facts in the light most favorable to Garrett, the non-moving party, this court cannot, as a matter of law, find that Garrett fails to state a claim for which relief can be granted. He claims that he was retaliated against for his activities as an IGRC representative. As noted, verbal harassment alone will not constitute a violation of a prisoner's constitutional rights but in this case, it appears that he was transferred for his activities as an IGRC representative. The defendants rely on numerous grievances which were denied by the CORC to show that their actions were proper. They also claim that Garrett has failed to show injury, however, at this juncture of the litigation with virtually no discovery in this case, this court cannot recommend dismissal as a matter of law.

D. Personal Involvement

It is well settled in this Circuit that personal involvement of defendants in alleged constitutional deprivations is a prerequisite to an award of damages under § 1983. Colon v. Coughlin, 58 F.3d 865, 873 (2d Cir.1995)(*citation omitted*). Since there is no respondeat superior liability, the defendant must be shown to have personal involvement in the alleged deprivation of rights. *Al- Jundi v. Estate of Rockefeller*, 885 F.2d 1060, 1065 (2d Cir.1989). Supervisory officials cannot be held liable under § 1983 solely for the acts of their subordinates. *See Monell v. Department of Social Serv.*, 436 U.S. 658, 690-695 (2d Cir.1978). However, a supervisory official can be held liable for constitutional violations if he or she: (1) directly participated in the violation; (2) failed to remedy the violation after learning of it through a report or appeal; (3) created a custom or policy fostering the violation after learning of it; or (4) was grossly negligent in supervising subordinates who caused the violation. *Sealey v. Giltner*, 116 F.3d 47, 51 (2d Cir.1997) (citing *Williams v. Smith*, 781 F.2d 319, 323-24 (2d Cir.1986)).

Garrett contends that defendants Reynolds and Mance allowed staff members under their supervision to violate his rights. More specifically, Mance refused to properly investigate Garrett's complaints. Garrett also claims that defendant Burge refused to grant his request for redress against defendant Centore. Finally, Garrett claims that the defendants collectively failed to properly train and supervise their employees.

*6 The defendants contend that the claims against the supervisory defendants should be dismissed for lack of personal involvement. However, this court finds this contention without merit since it appears that all of the defendants were involved in the investigation process of Garrett's complaint and he accuses all of them of continuing the alleged constitutional violation by failing to properly investigate the grievances he filed. Accordingly, this court recommends denying the defendants' motion for summary judgment based on the lack of personal involvement.

WHEREFORE, for the foregoing reasons, it is hereby

RECOMMENDED, that Garrett's claims against the defendants in their official capacity under the Eleventh Amendment should be dismissed since these claims are barred; and it is further

RECOMMENDED, that defendant O'Reilly be dismissed since he was never served; and it is further

RECOMMENDED, that the defendants' motion for summary judgment be denied in all other respects; and it is further

ORDERED, that the Clerk of the Court serve a copy of this Report-Recommendation upon the parties by regular mail.

NOTICE: Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1), the parties may lodge written objections to the foregoing report. Such objections shall be filed with the Clerk of the Court within TEN days. FAILURE TO SO OBJECT TO THIS REPORT WILL PRECLUDE APPELLATE REVIEW. Roldan v. Racette, 984 F.2d 85 (2d Cir.1993); 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed.R.Civ.P. 72, 6(a), 6(e).

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